Measuring gender transformative change

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Citation

Acknowledgments

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural research programs try to measure their contribution to a range of desired development outcomes, such as poverty reduction, food security, environmental sustainability and gender equality. This paper argues that the substantive measures (usually 'indicators') typically used to monitor these programs' outcomes and impacts on gender equality are limited; they are unable to capture the full range of programmatic contributions towards the larger processes of change involved in achieving gender equality. We aim to identify a range of indicators or progress markers that have been used to measure contributions to gender equality by programs outside of the agricultural sector. It will focus specifically on measures that have been used to monitor or evaluate 'gender transformative' programs, or "programs that seek to transform gender roles and create more gender-equitable relationships …[that] seek to change the underlying conditions that cause gender inequities" (Gupta et al. 2002). The paper will then consider what can be learned in order to more accurately measure advances toward gender equality. This includes rethinking not only what is measured (the substantive content), but also how we measure, when we measure and who measures.

Changing the scope of measurement

There is a need to reconsider what agricultural programs have typically measured in terms of contributions towards gender equality. Although agricultural programs aim to achieve advances in *gender* equality, they tend to only measure outcomes and impacts on *women's* empowerment. Women's empowerment programs can (and often do) lead to increases in gender equality, particularly when they go beyond women's choice and agency as individuals to support women's "capacity to undertake action to challenge the gendered structures of constraint" (Kabeer et al. 2013, 3).[1] However, many programs strive only for women's *individual* self-improvement (Wilson 2008), leaving unchallenged a range of structural and socially-defined constraints that limit the ability of these 'improved' women to exert agency, resulting in a failure to translate to larger scale increases in gender equality (and the potential for empowering other women in society). CARE International found that the indicators used to measure impact (such as women's participation in activities, training or political representation) can have "little or nothing to do with sustainable impacts on gender inequity" (Mosedale 2005, 31). While women's empowerment is a necessary component of gender equality, it is not sufficient for achieving it. In fact, women-focused interventions may even lead to negative outcomes for gender equality. For example, conditional cash transfer programs have been blamed for reinforcing women's traditional role in the household and could actually be detrimental in terms of gender equality (Holmes and Jones 2010).

Capturing achievements in gender equality requires taking into account processes of change that include but go beyond the individual or household level (i.e. changes to larger social relations, rules, norms and practices), beyond the tangible or easily measurable (i.e. changes to the relationships, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and expectations of individuals, communities and societies), and beyond only women (i.e. changes to men and relationships between and among men and women). In order to fully capture a program's real and potential contributions to the wider change processes involved in achieving gender equality, it is thus necessary to expand the scope of measurement beyond women's empowerment.

Expanding the scope of measurement will also require measurement to be conducted differently. According to ALINe (2010), there have been few attempts to capture project impacts on perceptions of gender roles despite anecdotal evidence that this is the case. This is "partly due to the lack of indicators … but also reflects concern about the difficulty in collecting this type of information". The tendency of agricultural programs to focus solely on women's empowerment, combined with or driven by SMART criteria,[2] has often led to a narrow set of quantitative indicators that measure material or tangible changes for individual women, from either a baseline or relative to their

husbands.[3] The scope of measurement needs to be widened and the narrow definition of what counts within women's empowerment (i.e. what is countable) needs to be expanded, particularly when developing new indicators. Thinking through what is measured in terms of gender equality, which is "inherently difficult to evaluate" (UN Women 2011) due to the complexity and intangibility of societal norms and dynamics, provides an opportunity to challenge narrow definitions of indicators (beyond only SMART, quantitative indicators) and to question whether indicators are even desirable (do they limit us to capturing 'snapshots', rather than *processes* of change?[4])

Gender transformative programs

It is important to distinguish between programs using a gender transformative approach from those using more conventional gender accommodating approaches (which tend to focus on women's empowerment). Programs focused on empowering women often "increase women's ability to achieve specific changes in their behavior or access ... [but] do not necessarily change the social order that gives rise to women's disadvantage" (Greene and Levack 2010, 5). While these 'gender accommodating' programs "merely acknowledge or mention gender norms and roles" (Barker 2007), 'gender transformative' programs directly work to change the social order, or the underlying factors that give rise to disparities among men and women (Greene and Levack 2010, 5). According to the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG):

Gender transformative approaches actively strive to examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalance of power … Gender-transformative approaches encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and/or address the power relationships between women and others in the community.

– Rottach et al. 2009

By directly seeking to confront the gendered structures of constraint, gender transformative programs make a concerted attempt to contribute to deeper, wider and more lasting contributions for gender equality, not just for individual women.

This paper will be limited to those programs that have been identified as 'gender transformative' and/or attempted to use less conventional measures of women's empowerment or gender equality – measures that attempted to go beyond the individual or household level, beyond the tangible and beyond women. The majority of the cases are derived from programs in the health sector (specifically around sexual and reproductive health and violence against women).

Gender transformative programs attempt to capture their contributions to the individual (for women and men) and social changes that lead to enhanced gender equality. At the individual level, these programs evaluate their contributions to material or easily testable cognitive changes (in assets, knowledge or practices, for example) alongside more intangible perceptual changes (e.g. shifts in attitudes, values and self-efficacy). Because gender is constructed *socially*, they also attempt to measure changes in interpersonal relationships (within and beyond the household) and changes in the larger societal rules and norms that produce gender inequality. Although these dimensions will be explored in separate sections, in reality, individuals, relationships and societal norms and rules are inseparable; they mutually produce one another and so must be combined to fully understand a program's contribution to gender equality.

Individual

Existing ways to measure changes in gender equality (or women's empowerment) tend to capture only material or cognitive changes because these are more tangible, testable and thus easily quantified. These may include measuring changes in one's assets and earnings, or changes in individual livelihood choices/practices, indicated by changes in women's employment rates, time allocation or marriage and fertility rates. A program's contribution often measure changes relative to a baseline or a control group.

Program impact is often demonstrated through indicators of changing knowledge or awareness. This may be around greater awareness of fertility or knowledge of the harmful consequences of female genital mutilation/cutting, for example (Rottach et al. 2009). The evidence may be gathered through self-reporting or it may involve testing of new knowledge. For example, in a reproductive health program aimed at men in Zimbabwe the indicator used to demonstrate changes in knowledge was the correct identification of an intrauterine device (Kim and Marangwanda

1997 in Barker et al. 2007). During the FilmAid initiative in Kenya, three questions were posed to assess increases in knowledge of women's issues after watching a film on wife inheritance (Lee 2007). As no other agency was addressing this issue in the area, the program believed they could claim credit for the increased knowledge.

Gender transformative programs have also measured and demonstrated individual behavioral change in a number of areas, including sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, treatment, care and support; fatherhood; gender-based violence; and maternal, newborn and child health (Barker et al. 2007). Tested measures include (Rottach et al. 2009)

- a decrease in incidence of gender-based violence, including psychological abuse, physical violence and sexual violence;
- a decrease in controlling behavior by an intimate partner;
- an increase in one's communication about sexual behavior.

Some programs have relied only on self-reports to measure behavioral change, while others have attempted to confirm, triangulate or corroborate evidence of such changes with stakeholders or actors, such as health professionals and partners (Barker et al. 2010).

Gender transformative programs also attempt to measure less tangible changes, such as changes to an individual's attitudes, values, beliefs and expectations about gender. Although changes in gender-related attitudes are widely acknowledged to be 'hard to measure' (ALINe 2010, 16), changing both men's and women's gender-related attitudes are key to the process of achieving gender equality and need to be captured. Individuals' attitudes represent and inform gender arrangements and practices. Sample research studies have found that men and boys with more rigid attitudes about masculinity are more likely to report harmful gender behaviors (such as violence against a partner) (Barker et al. 2007).

Many gender transformative programs attempt to quantify increases in gender-equitable attitudes and expectations by using perception-based indicators.[5] These may be attitudes towards oneself (e.g. increased self-esteem or self-efficacy) or attitudes toward gender norms and behaviors. Examples of gender-related attitude statements used by programs to measure change include (in Barker et al. 2007):

- Violence between a man and a woman is not a private affair (Soul City, South Africa).
- Women never deserve to be beaten (Soul City, South Africa).
- A man is strong or a protector (Young Dads Parenting Program, USA).
- Men approve of long-term methods of family planning (Campaign to Stimulate Men's Support, Zimbabwe).

Programs may also use standardized attitude scales that encapsulate such indicators. One of these, the gender-equitable men (GEM) scale is used to measure individual attitudes towards gender norms, including issues related to violence, sexuality and sexual relationships, reproductive health and disease prevention, domestic chores and child care, and homophobia and relationships with other men (Pulerwitz and Barker 2008). This scale was first developed by and used to evaluate Program H in Brazil, a program which sought to engage young men and communities in societal norms related to manhood. The program and the GEM scale have since been adapted for use internationally. The international men and gender equality survey (IMAGES) is a similar comprehensive survey instrument used to assess men's and women's attitudes (and behaviors) (Barker et al. 2011).

According to Pulerwitz and Barker (2008), using 'easily administered, quantitative measures' such as the GEM scale "provides a replicable way to determine the relative success of programs … for decision makers who are looking for evidence that gender norms can be influenced and that doing so makes a difference … a quantitative measure such as the GEM scale helps provide it". While useful, they acknowledge that these kinds of quantitative scales have their limitations. Given the complexity of gender-related attitudes, a quantitative scale cannot explain all or most of the variation in attitudes. Scales need to be accompanied by qualitative methods to triangulate findings and capture this complexity (Pulerwitz and Barker 2008, 334).

Fish farmers with their catch from a hatchery in Khulna, Bangladesh.

Photo Credit: M. Yousuf Tushar/WorldFish

Relationships: Intra-household and beyond

According to Cornwall and Edwards (2010), mainstream women's empowerment programs often neglect the role of relationships in bringing about the changes associated with empowerment, with consequences for achieving empowerment and gender equality. One challenge to valuing relationships, let alone measuring them, may be that relationships are "far less visible and far less tangible than the measurable 'results' that donors seek" (Cornwall and Edwards 2010, 5). Gender transformative programs attempt to go beyond measuring individual-level changes to measure the social changes involved in advancing gender equality, including changes in relationships. These programs recognize the value of changing interpersonal relationships so that 'gender' becomes "personally meaningful and consequential to men and boys, and women and girls" (Barker et al. 2010, 551). The programs acknowledge the importance of, and so attempt to capture, changes in intra-household relationships (i.e. between husbands and wives, women and mother-in-laws, or parents and children) and relationship dynamics beyond the household (i.e. between and among groups of men or women, within mixed-gender community groups).

Gender transformative programs may work with one member of a household, or with multiple family members together (i.e. spouses). These programs then measure impacts on individuals and their relationships, thus acknowledging and valuing changing relationships as distinct from the sum of individual behavior changes (even if this often provides the mechanism to change a relationship).[6] Examples of indicators of changing household relationships may include

- a decrease in incidence of family conflict (i.e. incidents of arguments, or physical or sexual conflict);
- an increase in spousal/family communication;
- an increase in joint decision-making among partners;
- more equitable treatment of children.

For example, the International Rescue Committee in Burundi had a female-targeted village savings and loan program that included a course for women participants and their spouses to analyze household decision-making. Women who took the additional course reported positive changes in their relationship dynamics (greater decision-making and less violence) than those who did not take it (World Bank 2011, 320).

Meghla admiring her newborn niece in Khula, Bangladesh.

Photo Credit: Felix Clay/Duckrabbit

MEASURES

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Murphy-Graham (2010) provides a qualitative assessment of an alternative secondary education program (the *Sistema de Aprendiazje Tutorial*, or SAT) in Honduras, emphasizing the impact of the program on intimate relationships. She found that the program's dedication to dialogue and examining gender assumptions led women participants to report an increased ability to communicate with their partners and to influence decisions in the household. While these changes were only *individual* changes in attitude (self-confidence and self-efficacy) or behavior (expression, negotiation skills), they contributed to changing the *nature* of their spousal relationship. SAT participants reported greater relationship changes (i.e. more frequent communication and negotiation) versus a comparison group of nonparticipants. Changes in individuals does not only influence interpersonal relationships, but also "redefine gender norms" (Murphy-Graham 2010, 330).

Some gender transformative programs also recognize the importance of relationships beyond the household, whether in posing gender-related barriers that need to be addressed (e.g. women's isolation or lack of relationships, or harmful relationships between women and their neighbors or service providers) or in helping to deliver gender transformative outcomes (Rottach et al. 2009). As with intra-household relationships, changing relationship dynamics beyond the household should be seen as distinct from the sum of individual changes, although individual changes are integral to changing these relationships, and vice versa. Indicators of new or changing relationships beyond the household may include

- increased support (emotional, instrumental or general) among community members;
- expansion of social networks;
- increased rate of participation in community organizations;
- increased incidence of social groups or community action.

The *Berhane Hewan* program in Ethiopia highlighted the role of social factors in promoting child marriage, in particular the isolation of married and unmarried adolescent girls (Muthengi and Erulkar 2011). Among other interventions to combat child marriage, the program formed groups and held regular group meetings about topics such as reproductive health and livelihood skills. An evaluation found that the program was "instrumental" in expanding and strengthening social networks for girls (Muthengi and Erulkar 2011, 2); more girls reported having a non-familial best friend after the program, and were more likely to talk to their friends about marriage and reproductive health. Overall, the program was successful in delaying the age of marriage among young girls (though not among older girls).

Norms and structures

At the core of a gender transformative approach is the recognition that gender is socially constructed, and so achieving gender equality requires changing underlying social *relations* (not just individuals). As noted, interpersonal relationships make 'gender' meaningful to individuals, shaping their gender-specific attitudes and behaviors. Changes to one's gender-specific attitudes and behaviors will influence their interpersonal relationships; similarly, more gender-equitable relationships influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors. But achieving gender equality also requires us to address the macro-social gender relations that 'intertwine' with interpersonal relationships to reproduce gender at multiple scales (Grabe 2011). This is why gender transformative programs aim to move beyond interventions with specific groups of recipients to change the broader social norms and structures that shape gender inequality (Barker et al. 2007). In order to do this, programs have to understand the multiple scales in which gender norms are produced and operate, involve the larger community or society at large and include a mobilization component (Rottach et al. 2009).

Gender norms have a "powerful influence" on individuals' actions and are one of the "foundations of gender inequality" (World Bank 2013). Gender norms are partly reflected in the formal structures of society (laws and formal rules) and changes to this has been measured in at least one gender transformative program. The Soul City program in South Africa used mass media to campaign against domestic violence, resulting in an increase in public

debate and 'changing discourse' on domestic violence (Usdin et al. 2005). An evaluation of Soul City 'largely' attributed the implementation of the government's Domestic Violence Act to the Soul City interventions (Usdin et al. 2005).

Gender norms are also reflected in the "informal, implicit rules that govern what a person and cannot do in the pursuit of daily life" (World Bank 2013, 15). However, these are notoriously more 'difficult to measure' (World Bank 2013). Soul City evaluated the impact on 'subjective' norms in a similar fashion to its impact on individual attitudes. Using a national survey carried out pre-intervention (baseline) and post-intervention, they asked, "My community agrees that domestic violence is a serious problem", in addition to "I agree domestic violence is a serious problem" (personal attitude). Using this measuring technique, they found that high exposure to Soul City media advocacy resulted in a positive shift in subjective norms. Qualitative data helped to confirm this finding.

Changing rigid gender norms is integral to transforming gender relations and thus the gender transformative approach. However, in practice, gender transformative programs have had difficulty achieving this and/or

measuring it. Programs claim to transform gender norms but then only measure change among a "relatively small number of individuals" (Barker et al. 2010, 551). Achieving gender norm change in individuals or small groups is certainly vital to changing broader social norms and structures but, "[*true*] gender transformation is clearly longer-term and must transcend relatively small-scale community-based or service-based activities" (Barker et al. 2007). To measure 'true' gender transformative change, the authors challenge programs to go beyond the individual level to measure societal attitudes[7] and the larger social change processes involved.

Community meeting of canal clearers, Zambia.

This paper has made the case for going beyond conventional measures of achieving gender equality (or women's empowerment) to fully capture a program's contributions to the complex change processes required to do so. The ways that gender transformative programs have attempted to measure or evaluate contributions towards gender equality, at the individual, relationship and societal levels, can be instructive for those attempting to do so. However, gender transformative approaches and programs also experience limitations in terms of capturing processes of change.

There has been some critique of *what* these programs choose to measure (the substantive content). Some programs choose inappropriate or insufficient indicators to measure their contribution to gender equality. In a review of evaluation studies of programs with men and boys, Barker et al. (2010) make a plea to exercise caution about how much can be attributed to the existing outcomes and indicators. On indicators used in reproductive health they state, "on the surface, increasing condom use among men and increasing men's use of health services do not inherently reduce gender equality – unless they also reduce the burden on women for contraceptive use or unless they represent a change in how men view and interact with women" (Barker et al. 2010, 549). Improved health behaviors do not always lead to greater gender equality, nor is gender equality always reflected in improved behaviors. Yet, there is "little discussion" about whether the outcomes measured are connected to broader gender relations (Barker et al. 2010, 551). A better understanding of the process of change with regard to gender equality may help programs to choose the most appropriate (and sufficient range) of indicators to represent it.

There is also a debate on *how* programs measure change. Previous reviews have noted the "relative lack of rigorous evaluation studies of interventions with men and boys" (*in* Barker et al. 2007, 8). Barker et al.'s (2007) WHO-sponsored review of 58 evaluation studies labeled evaluations as 'rigorous' if they provided quantitative data with: pre/post testing; control group or regression (or time-

series data); analysis of statistical significance; adequate sample size; and/or systematic qualitative data. In reality, only studies that relied on quantitative data (sometimes complemented by qualitative data) were labeled as 'rigorous'. Also with greater weight given to quasi-experimental and randomized control trial designs in the rating of overall effectiveness ('effective', 'promising' or 'weak'), of the evaluations that relied only on qualitative data collection methods zero were considered 'effective', only 3 were rated as 'promising' and the rest were 'weak'. There is an obvious bias in their review, and in evaluation more generally ('the gold standard'), towards quasi-experimental designs that collect quantitative data and assume a linear process of change. While Barker et al. (2010) mention the role of qualitative assessments in clarifying how changes relate to gender equality, it is clearly valued less than evaluations with quantitative findings and methods. This bias may be a reflection of biases in evaluation generally and/or evaluations specific to the health sector, which many gender transformative programs have been rooted in. Regardless, it may be argued that the complexity of achieving gender equality requires rethinking this bias. CARE International has taken a different approach to measuring gender equality, recognizing that the emphasis on quantitative targets does not capture the quality of the interventions they want to encourage. In the *CARE Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment*, Mosedale (2005) states:

"

Much of what CARE would hope to change when it comes to women's empowerment involves deep, slow, gradual and non-linear qualitative phenomena. These kinds of changes require sustained, qualitative investigation and it is doubtful if any simple quantitative indicators can help.

"

The danger of relying only or primarily on quantitative indicators or methods is not only that it cannot adequately capture the complex process of change towards gender equality. It also results in prioritizing work or interventions that are easily measured and leads to neglecting activities that may be more important, but less easily measurable (Mosedale 2005, 28). The task of transforming gender relations requires work addressing less easily measured, often intangible, gender attitudes, relationships and norms and this should not be lost in the quest for easy (quantitative) measurement.

There is also some debate around *when* changes in gender relations can or should be measured. Most gender transformative programs have tended to evaluate impact over relatively short time frames (Barker et al. 2010). Barker et al.'s (2010) review found that almost none of the programs measured the continued impact of the programs beyond their short project cycles. In their review of gender approach to reproductive health, Rottach et al. (2009) also found long-term evaluations lacking in the field, despite the long time frames involve with achieving this kind of change: "Gender norms are learned and reinforced over many years; undoing those norms takes time. The need for evaluations to likewise measure impact over longer spans of time persists" (Rottach et al. 2009, 67). Even if desirable, short-term performance targets set by donors often make efforts at long-term measurement or evaluation difficult. In their review of the efforts of a bilateral US Government program

(PEPFAR) to address gender equality, Ashburn et al. (2009) state, "its focus on short-term results, as opposed to long-term social change, neglects interventions that require longer-term implementation to shift gender norms". As mentioned above, the barriers to long-term evaluations not only fail to capture longer term or structural changes related to gender but also inform what kind of work is possible.

The tendency towards short-term evaluations is also problematic because it lends more to capturing 'snapshots' of change, rather than appreciating and attempting to measure dynamic and often non-linear processes of change. If programs are truly challenging gender relations, then there is the possibility of seeing worsening gender inequality in the short-term, at the same time as progress is being made. Greene et al. (2011) observe a backlash against gender equitable change in some settings. They point to studies that have found increases in domestic violence due to men's changing place and power relative to women (Greene et al. 2011, 19). If programs are only evaluated in the short-term, the impact could appear very different than if the program was monitored over a long time period, allowing for capture of the full dynamics involved in the process of change and adapting programs as required. Furthermore, the pretense that projects can measure transformative change in the short-term is likely to condition funding priorities away from the efforts that may have the capacity to create more lasting contributions to gender equality, even if it may not appear that way in the short-term.

Women's awareness workshop, Malaita, Solomon Islands.

Photo Credit: Delvene Boso/WorldFish

Gender transformative programs give some consideration of *who* is reporting changes. For example, Barker et al.'s (2007) review gave greater weight to evaluations that went beyond self-reported change to include the perspectives of others, such as partners or service providers. This helps to overcome the "common challenge of social desirability (distinguishing between actual behavior and attitudes and the fact that men may tell researchers what they think they want to hear)" (Barker et al. 2007, 7). But the challenging task of measuring changes which involve intangible attitudes and values as much as tangible outcomes means taking seriously the presence of power and positionality in and throughout the measurement process. This means questioning more than who is reporting on an outcome within an already established measurement framework. It also means trying to change who is choosing the indicators, who is designing the measuring and who decides what or who the measuring is for. In short, it means that the measurement process itself challenges gender (and power) relations and is participatory all the way through. According to Mosedale (2005):

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Impact assessment should not be insulated from rights-based approaches. Impact research that relies on objective, 'expert' knowledge, uses standard social science assumptions and designs, and treats poor women as objects rather than subjects may do more harm than good. Currently, as donors become more concerned about demonstrating impact, quantitative and experimental approaches are gaining popularity (the MIT poverty lab approach, for example). This risks isolating the very poor we wish to empower from the analytical processes, knowledge generation, and informed decision making that good impact assessment is meant to generate and so reinforcing dependence-creating, expert-driven models of development.

"

This quotation highlights concerns around who measures, while at the same time encourages us to consider what we can aspire to through measurement. The measurement process itself has impact – it can serve to further isolate or disempower the poor by treating them as objects, or it can be used as a means of empowerment. The measurement process as a whole – not just the indicators we choose – can and should attempt to reflect the process of transforming relations that the programs seek to achieve.

Measuring a program's contribution to the goal of gender equality, as differentiated from women's empowerment, encourages us to expand the scope of measurement beyond conventional indicators – which have tended to focus on what is easily measurable, related to only women, at the individual or at most household levels. Taking seriously the complex and multi-scalar change processes involved in achieving gender equality, gender transformative programs have attempted to go beyond these conventional measures. This has led to measuring change in individual knowledge, behavior and attitudes, in interpersonal relationships within and beyond the household and in larger social norms and structures, which has involved experimenting with measuring less tangible (and less easily measurable) outcomes among men and among women. While providing interesting insights for future efforts in measuring contributions to gender equality, critiques of measurement approaches also remind us there is still much thinking, discussing and experimenting to do in order to more fully trace, measure, represent and appraise the change processes leading to gender equality.

Recommendations for future measurement efforts are listed below.

- Programs need a better appreciation of the larger social change processes involved in achieving gender equality, in order to choose the most appropriate (and sufficient range) of indicators to represent it. Considering the dynamic processes involved, these indicators should be flexible and changeable.
- Programs need to make more effort in measuring changes in gender norms at the broader, societal level, and not just among a target or project group. This will help shed light on how the broader social context conditions program efforts to change individual or community-level attitudes and values, and potentially how program efforts to change attitudes and values may even influence the broader social context.

- Programs should not rely primarily or only on conventional measurement techniques (i.e. quasi-experimental designs which primarily depend on quantitative indicators) to appraise change. Alternative ways of measuring that value qualitative investigation (alone or alongside quantitative measurements) are vital to capturing contributions toward the complex process of transforming gender relations. This task requires capturing changes in intangible gender attitudes, relationships and norms (not just in the amount and direction, but also in the depth and quality) that cannot and should not attempt to be simplified into a set of quantitative indicators.
- Programs should try to measure their contributions to change processes over much longer time frames, even beyond the life-span of an individual project. This could encourage programs to go beyond doing only work that is achievable in the short-term to try to address the gender norms and structures that require longer time frames to bring about and witness, change and produce more meaningful contributions to gender equality. A longer time frame would give a program time to appreciate and adapt to the dynamic and nonlinear processes of change that emerge; a short-term or a one point in time (a 'snapshot') measurement may reveal change that appears to move in the opposite direction to what is desired.
- Programs should ensure the measurement process is participatory all the way through. This means not only changing who is responsible for reporting outcomes within an existing measurement framework, but also reconsidering who is choosing the indicators, who is designing the measuring process, and who decides what or who the measuring effort is for. The measurement process should aim to reflect the process of transforming relations that the gender transformative programs are seeking to achieve.

In considering how to approach measurement, it is worth thinking through *why* we want to measure program contributions to gender equality. It is important to distinguish between performance monitoring for evaluation and monitoring for program learning.[8] If the goal is for the former, then conventional measures of gender equality (in reality, 'women's empowerment') that have been tried and tested may be sufficient, at least until more innovative approaches to measure gender equality are established.[9] However, if the goal is the latter, then we should be open to new measuring approaches that attempt to better represent the dynamic processes of change involved in achieving gender equality in order to inform program learning and practice. The learning approach not only helps to feed into and improve practice, but provides opportunities to develop new approaches and methods so that the measurement process itself may be transformative.

CONCLUSION

NOTES

1   For example, CARE International recognizes the "sum total of changes" required to achieve women's empowerment, combining changes in individual women's aspirations and capabilities with changes in structures and power relations that condition individual agency (Martinez and Wu 2009).

2   SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Sensitive.

3   See the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, for example.

4   Is it worth considering using 'progress markers', for example, to tell the 'complex story of change' rather than indicators, which tend to provide 'simply one-off snapshots of change'? (Outcome Mapping Learning Community).

5   See examples in Ricardo et al. (2011).

6   For more, see Benjamin and Sullivan's (1999) theoretical model of what is required to change martial relationships (*in* Murphy-Graham 2010).

7   See existing ways of measuring gender norms in the World Values Survey, the OECD SIGI and MEASURE DHS Surveys (also Seguino 2007 and van Staveren 2013). The Nobo Jibon project in Bangladesh has incorporated questions about broader gender roles and norms in a survey (HKI 2011).

8   See Dlamini (2006) for more on the distinction between the results orientation in current development M&E practice and the focus on transformational learning processes in alternative M&E approaches.

9   The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index or the Compliance Indicators for CEDAW Article 14, for example.

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